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ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 100924Z MAY 08  
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1784  
INFO RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY 4340  
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 3789  
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY 3706  
RUEHNC/AMEMBASSY NICOSIA PRIORITY 3128  
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH PRIORITY 3440  
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY 1335  
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL PRIORITY 0111

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 000645

SIPDIS

STATE FOR DS/CC; DS/DSS/ITA; DS/IP/NEA; NEA/EX  
POSTS FOR RSO; S/ES

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/07/2018  
TAGS: [CASC](#) [PTER](#) [MOPS](#) [LE](#) [SY](#)  
SUBJECT: BEIRUT EAC MEETING MAY 10, 2008

Classified By: CDA Michele J. Sison a.i. for reason 1.4 (b) and (d).

#### Summary -----

¶1. (C) At 1000 on May 10, 2008, CDA Sison convened a meeting of the Emergency Action Committee (EAC). Present were A/DCM, SpecAsst, CONS, DAO, ODC, PD, RAO, RSO, and MGMT. There is continued denial of access to the Beirut International Airport (BIA). The EAC decided to maintain a restriction on personal moves to a small area around the compound and upheld a decision to cancel all non-mission critical TDY visits through May 16. Another EAC will be held at 1600 local time.

¶2. (SBU) There are currently 65 official Americans under COM authority in Beirut and 13 members of a SOCCENT 5th Special Forces Group JCET team from Fort Campbell due to depart on May 20. F-77 figures from March 2008 estimate there are 92,232 potential evacuees in Beirut: 59,372 Americans and 32,860 non - U.S. citizens. End Summary.

#### Security Updates -----

¶3. (C) Lebanese Internal Security Forces (ISF) personnel told us that there were clashes between Druze and Hizballah fighters overnight and 10 Hizballah fighters were reportedly killed.

¶4. (C) Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) sources tell us that opposition protesters continue to hold their location in the tent city that was erected outside of the Grand Serail in November 2006. The British Ambassador, whose chancery is located on the Serail hill, told us that "people were making a lot of noise yesterday, so we decided to close shop. We think it was just intimidation tactics, though."

¶5. (C) A peaceful march has been called for 1100 in the downtown area by Lebanese media representatives to protest the capture and burning of the pro-March 14 Future TV station on May 9.

#### Consular Issues -----

¶6. (C) A limited number (exact figure unknown) of private AmCits will depart from Beirut today via private maritime charter. We have been told that some Americans have been able to cross overland into Syria after being detained at the border for five hours. There are rumors, but no confirmation that some AmCits were turned away at the border. The British

Ambassador told us that Syria has begin to issue visas to British citizens at the border.

¶7. (C) The Consular section has suspended non-emergency non-immigrant visa operations and the decision was announced locally via press releases and was posted on the Embassy website. We will still service humanitarian travel and official requests on a case-by-case basis.

¶8. (C) There has been an increase in the number of phone calls from American citizens looking for information on the current security situation and asking about options for departure for Lebanon. We have started a log to track the number of incoming calls and at 1300, we will be standing up a phone bank staffed by American employees to disseminate information. The phone bank will be operational from 0800 - 2200 (0100 - 1500 EST) on May 10 and May 11 and staffing POC's will be shared with SES-0 later today.

¶9. (C) Continuing a poll of friendly local embassies, French Embassy contacts said they are not ready to call for an evacuation of the 8,000 - 9,000 resident French citizens. The EU Heads of Mission also met yesterday and only the Italians are pursuing an active evacuation plan. All other EU members are leaving citizens to find their own means to leave the country.

#### Current Mission Capabilities

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¶10. (C) Currently, the Embassy is able to resupply from the local economy and our Awkar location is removed from the intense fighting in the downtown areas. However, we have noticed that food supplies in the local grocery stores are running low.

¶11. (C) At this time, post is not requesting additional personnel or equipment, but we are grateful that plans are moving forward to reopen the Beirut Air Bridge.  
SISON